

For Immediate Release

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Washington, D.C.-- Congressman Sires applauds the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board of Commissioners for providing up to \$1 billion to expedite a solution to the Bayonne Bridge heights issue. The Bayonne Bridge, which is 78 years old, has a current clearance of between 151 to 156 feet and the bridge is too low to accommodate large container vessels.

"This funding is a vital step towards ensuring the job security of over 260,000 employees whose livelihoods are generated by activity in the Port of New York and New Jersey," said Congressman Sires. "Finding a solution to this issue is one of my top priorities in Congress. It is imperative that large vessels are able to patron our ports so that economic success can be generated in the region."

In 2014, the Panama Canal will widen and larger ships will patron the East Coast. These ships will not be able to pass under the current height restrictions of the Bayonne Bridge. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is in the process of undertaking a comprehensive study to examine which potential solutions are the most feasible. Potential solutions include: (1) jacking the bridge, (2) creating a lift bridge mechanism, (3) building a new bridge, and (4) replacing the bridge with a tunnel. Upon completion of the Port Authorities study expected at year's end the most environmentally sound and cost effective approaches will be determined. Local and state officials have been working with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

and Members of Congress to reach a solution.

“A cost-effective and expedient solution is needed to protect local jobs and facilitate an effective goods movement,” said Sires. “I will continue to fight for federal funding to address this important issue.”

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